

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 087 116

EA 005 859

AUTHOR Gallagher, Paul E.
TITLE Playgrounds: An Experiment in Citizen Participation. A Report.
INSTITUTION Old Colony Planning Council, Brockton, Mass.
SPONS AGENCY Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Jun 71
NOTE 66p.; This document contains 33 leaves, all of which are 11 inches wide by 8 1/2 inches high and require two microfiche frames

EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.65 HC-\$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Building Innovation; *Citizen Participation; *Community Development; *Economically Disadvantaged; Federal Aid; Guides; Minority Groups; *Playgrounds; Program Descriptions; Student Participation
IDENTIFIERS *Charrettes

ABSTRACT

Lay citizens, high school students, and professionals were involved in a project to plan, design, and construct three innovative playgrounds in the inner-city of Brockton, Massachusetts. Using the citizen participation process, two playgrounds designed innovative uses of donated materials such as old tires, discarded telephone poles, and conduit pipe were planned and completed. How the conception of the charrette process was implemented is described in separate accounts of each of the three charrettes. In order to provide some guide to communities, organizations, or institutions who may be interested in attempting a similar experiment in building playgrounds using citizen participation, a brief, outlined "how-to" manual is included. (Photographs may reproduce poorly.)
(Author/MLP)

ED 087116

Brockton: Charrettes

OLD COLONY PLANNING COUNCIL



EA C05 859

PLAYGROUNDS:

AN EXPERIMENT IN CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

by Paul E. Gallagher

A report from the Old Colony Planning Council

The preparation of this report was financially aided through a federal grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, under the Urban Planning Assistance Program authorized by Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954, as amended.

81.50

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Foreword	3	M. The Copeland School Construction	18
		N. Ending	19
II. Account of Project	5		
A. Beginning	6	III. Summary and Critique	21
B. The Professionals	6	A. Charrette I - The East Side	22
C. The Community	7	B. Charrette II - North Warren Area	23
D. Charrette I	7	C. Charrette III - Youth	23
E. Building the "Visible Structure"	8	D. Conclusions and Recommendations	24
F. Summing Up Charrette I	9		
G. The Long Winter of Charrette II	11		
H. Charrette II Meetings: Searching for The Forgotten Man	11	VI. Appendices	25
I. Turning to Youth Involvement	14	A. How-To-Manual	26
J. Plymouth St. Playground: Revisited - March 30 & 31	14	B. Project Participants	30
K. Preparing for the Youth Charrette	15	C. Donors	31
L. The Youth Charrette: Creating a Playground	16	D. Bibliography	31

I. Foreword



CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

"What is the city but the people?"

William Shakespeare

Coriolanus, Act III

There are 90,000 people in the City of Brockton, Massachusetts. Some are wealthy; many are not. A third of these people, most of the have-nots, live in the inner-city in a four square mile area where over fifty percent of the housing is in a deteriorating or dilapidated condition. There are a few thousand blacks and several hundred Puerto Ricans. They are, most of them, poor.

These are people of the city and for them, the era of traditional New England self-sufficiency has passed forever. Government must provide for some of their needs, for the sake of efficiency or because there is no other provider. Trash is picked-up, letters are delivered, welfare is distributed, schools are built, playgrounds are constructed. But the needs and wants of the people differ and the government is too far removed, too large and unwieldy; sometimes, as in the case of minorities and the poor, because their voices are too small to be heard or, even worse, because a "pick-yourself-up-by-the-bootstraps-government" is not listening at all.

If lack of communication is the problem, is citizen participation the answer? With it, could such community development projects as playgrounds for the inner-city be planned, designed and constructed - playgrounds that would represent the needs and wants of the community? These are the questions that this project sought to answer. The project, funded by a \$17,000 grant from HUD to the Old Colony Planning Council, was to plan and design three innovative playgrounds in the inner-city of Brockton using the citizen-participation process. The project began in March, 1970 and ended in June, 1971. The project staff found no hard answers, particularly not the ones it sought -- what follows is what this staff observed.

II. Account of Project



BEGINNING

*"Master, shall I begin with
the usual jokes
That the audience always
laugh at?"*

Aristophanes

Although a great deal had come before, it began - really began - on a muggy summer night, August 18, 1970, in a community center musty and airless from being locked and unused, in a public housing project in Brockton, Massachusetts.

The staff for the playground project came early. They brought folding chairs from the city's poverty center, a movie projector and screen borrowed from a nearby school and coffee and soft drinks bought from a neighborhood market. Windows were opened and chairs arranged.

Six months before, Self-Help, the city's poverty agency had suggested that the Old Colony Planning Council apply to HUD for a special projects grant to plan three playgrounds in the inner-city of Brockton utilizing citizen-participation. Charles Rowe, the planner for the OCPC, gathered together an informal, voluntary "staff" to research and formulate a proposal and then prepare an application to HUD for funding.

This volunteer staff's community organizer was Ronald Barber, a black ex-Marine, recently returned from Vietnam who lived in that same public housing project. Paul Gallagher, a free-lance writer with a law degree, was the project writer. Charles Rowe, a city planner and former Peace Corpsman, would supervise the project.

The plan they prepared and submitted to HUD as an "Application for an Urban Planning Assistance Grant for a Recreation and Playground Study" was accepted. HUD awarded a \$17,000 grant to the OCPC for study and planning purposes and several Brockton sponsors were contacted to provide the local share. Soon after, the project and its staff were underway.

Opening the windows had helped, but it was still hot and humid. So hot that several men had taken off their jackets, and loosened their ties. The women leaned on armchairs and fanned with folded meeting announcements. There were many children, they were thirsty and restless.

Ron Barber began. He explained that the playground project would use the "charrette" process. "A 'charrette'," he continued "is a team composed of community members and professional planners, designers, recreational agencies and public officials who, in a working partnership, decide upon the location and design of a playground in your neighborhood". He added, "The professionals will offer advice but the decisions will be made by you - the people who live in this community."

THE PROFESSIONALS

*"Milk and honey on the other side,
hallelujah!"*

*"Michael Row The Boat Ashore"
a song*

Two months earlier, Ron Barber had explained the "charrette" concept to another assemblage - the other side of the "working partnership" - the professionals.

A steering committee composed primarily of the sponsors providing the local share, formed to lend their expertise and guidance to the project generally, and to the charrettes in particular. The committee included former Brockton Mayor Alvin Jack Sims, now executive director of the OCPC, others in the project staff and representatives from Self-Help, the Brockton Y.M.C.A., School Department, Park Department, Recreation Department, playground consultants from Advisory for Educational Environments, and C. Glover Thompson a local architect.

Meeting several times between June and August the steering committee decided to function on an advisory basis and not dictate to the community. At these weekly meetings guidelines for the project were formed and the target areas for charrette action were pinpointed.

The first target area selected within the inner-city was the East Side. In the bounds of this area there existed only minimal play facilities, two public housing projects and the majority of Brockton's black and low income population.

An open meeting for all East Side residents to discuss playgrounds was announced in the local newspapers; posters and pamphlets were distributed door to door. The announcement read that there would be movies, slides, coffee and refreshments. All ages were welcome. The time and place were August 18, 1970 in the Community Center in

Crescent Court, the heart of the city's largest and most racially mixed public housing project.

THE COMMUNITY

"Now here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!"

Lewis Carroll

"Alice Through the Looking Glass"

Over fifty people were in the community center that August evening. Most of them were black. Many were children - small children whom mothers did not want to leave alone at home. Noise from the boys and girls playing in the narrow, open strip between the project buildings filtered in through the open windows.

Visibly, the project staff was disappointed. After an extensive publicity campaign on the East Side including a distribution of 800 flyers, posters, news articles and door to door visits by Ron Barber only twenty adults had shown up and very few of them were men.

After initial explanation by Ron Barber, it was evident that many of the community residents were skeptical and suspicious. Some, particularly the black men, were challenging and bitter. They enumerated other governmental promises not kept, requests unfulfilled. They had no faith in the possibility of obtaining construction funds from the city. Questions were asked such as, "Why should we have to build the playground ourselves? People are getting paid to do that job - why don't they do it?" And, "I can't get excited about the government funding playground studies. We need jobs, not playgrounds! What can you do about jobs?"

Dr. Allan Leiman, the AEE playground consultant, responded, "Believe me, it's better to use your energy to plan and build and not let it rot inside and sour to anger and despair. Anger and despair will not help your child, but perhaps this project will. Sometimes it may seem hard enough just to live, but this project needs whatever energy you can spare."

When the catharsis was over and some suspicions allayed, tempers abated and fifteen people volunteered to serve on the first charrette.

CHARRETTE I

"We are the two halves of a pair of scissors, when apart, Pecksniff, but together we are something."

Charles Dickens

"Martin Chuzzlewit"

The citizen representatives and the professionals came together for their first formal meeting on September 17, 1970 at the Brockton Y.M.C.A. Attending were seven inner-city residents and seven steering committee members.

The format was unstructured and free exchange of ideas was encouraged. Neither half of the working partnership knew for sure the direction the project would take. It was a time for each side to be educated by the other.

The conversation jumped from topic to topic. Some expressed concerns about vandalism, maintenance, supervision, safety and the need for a pedestrian light at the crossing from the housing project to the playground. Others suggested play equipment that ranged from benches for the elderly to junk bulldozers. Efforts were made to draw out the charrette members and convince them that everyone's contribution was valuable.

At the end of the meeting the neighborhood charrette had come to several basic decisions:

1. The playground should service all age groups.
2. It should be a multi-seasonal playground.
3. The best location would be the Plymouth Street play area, across from the Crescent Court public housing project.
4. Innovative play equipment was preferred over more conventional structures.

A week later, the second meeting followed at the OCPD office.

Attendance was good for the second meeting. Those present included:

Five East Side residents.

Three At-large inner-city residents.

Five Steering Committee members.

This proved to be the approximate ratio for the five meetings of Charrette I.

The second meeting began with the charrette members probing the scope of the planning project and the role that they should play. Some favored preparing a five-year master plan to develop the park (Salisbury Park) that bordered on the selected Plymouth Street playground site. In the end it was decided to concentrate on the small, vacant tract on Plymouth Street; a master plan fell beyond the intent and capacity of the project, limited to a year's duration.

Discussion at the meeting became repetitive, no new major discussions were being made and some of the members were obviously becoming impatient. A community resident asked what recommendations the playground consultant, Dr. Leitman could make about playground equipment. Dr. Leitman replied, "My recommendation is not to look to me for recommendations."

Dr. Leitman explained that although it seemed a difficult and time consuming process, he wanted to glean his information and guidelines from charrette discussion and suggestions so that he could learn what activities were genuinely wanted, what age groups were to be served, and what should be done with existing equipment. Then he could try to fit the pieces together to form a playground design. The meeting concluded on this note.

A few weeks later at a third meeting, because of fears expressed by both the community and the professionals that this would be just another "study" project and nothing more, it was decided to attempt to build one playground structure in the fall. An innovative plan for a tower-platform with rubber tire climbers, swings and a slide, built from donated materials, was selected as it would be immediately "visible" to the community. If successful, it would serve as an indication of the project's good faith and encourage the community's active participation in the remainder of the project.

The final plan was a composite of the Community's ideas, designs prepared by the architect, Glover Thompson and Dr. Leitman's recommendations.

After much discussion, it was also generally agreed that the labor force would be solicited from the neighborhood and not from suggested outside sources which included striking unions and a local Sea-Bee detachment. "It could be," commented Dr. Leitman, "that Ron Barber will have to start building the structure himself and hopefully, as Tom Sawyer whitewashing his fence, draw out curious members of the

community to give him a hand."

The fourth meeting had to be rescheduled when only two community members showed up. On the rescheduled date a list of materials to be sought from donors was drawn up and November 11, 1970 - Veteran's Day - was pinpointed as the construction date.

BUILDING THE "VISIBLE" STRUCTURE

"Work consists of whatever a body is obliged to do . . . Play consists of whatever a body is not obliged to do."

Mark Twain
"Tom Sawyer"

Veterans' Day began ominously with heavy black clouds and intermittent showers. Most of the people in Brockton were fearful for the annual parade, but Terry D'Eugenio, of the Advisory for Educational Environments, a perpetually smiling, big-framed former Marine and now builder of children's playgrounds, worried about the weather for different reasons.

By 11:30 a.m. the rain had stopped and the clouds rolled away. The tools provided by AEZ, the Y.M.C.A. and the Recreation Department stood ready, as did the telephone poles delivered by the Brockton Edison Company; the lumber donated by a local company; and a load of sand left by the Parks Department; woodchips from the Forestry Service; a slide from the Recreation Department; discarded automobile tires from a local garage; and several members of the steering committee. But no children and no adults from the community.

When the shovels broke ground and the chain-saw sounded its grating alarm, the children came, followed by mothers. But the fathers and husbands never came. Some stood in doorways and others behind windows, but they never crossed the street. One black man beckoned Paul Gallagher over and offered him nails, which were needed, but declined Gallagher's offer to come over and join in.

The children, however, had a grand time, most of them even skipped the city's big parade. They shoveled pole holes in the rocky ground, struggled with heavy wheelbarrows in teams and, under Terry's supervision, drilled holes, sawed boards and pounded nails.

When it was dark, the platform structure of telephone poles, lumber, a gangplank and a slide was finished; four poles were placed to border

the area, rocks and trash were cleared and a sand and woodchip base had been prepared around the structure.

When the daily newspaper, the *Brockton Enterprise*, took a picture of the structure in the graying light, the platform was obscured by the sixty children that had built it. Then the children began to play on it while the tired adults started home.

Allan Leitman reflected on the day and said, "If only something could be built every Saturday." Everyone agreed.

SUMMING UP CHARRETTE I

"Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning."

Sir Winston Churchill

Speech, November 10, 1942

The fifth and final meeting of Charrette I was held on November 30, 1970. Beer and refreshments were provided and the slides of the construction were shown. The final plan for the remainder of the play-

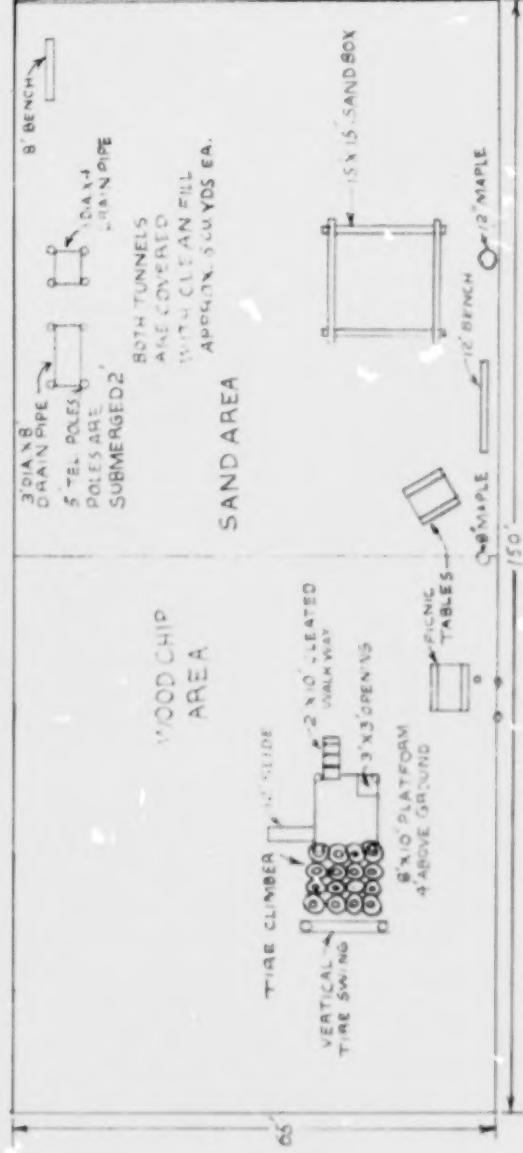
ground was drafted by the charrette. It included a rubber tire "cargo net" climber, tire swings, a telephone pole sandbox and a conduit tunnel.

In the summary and critique portion of the meeting, it was noted that the numerical involvement of the community, particularly the males, in the planning and construction phases was disappointing. But it was heartening that a playground had been begun and would be completed, despite the fact that construction funds had not been provided for the project. It was also encouraging that the Recreation Department had included \$5,000 for this project in its proposed budget for 1971.

As a final question, Jack Sims, director of the OCPC, asked the community representatives if they could do it again, alone. They were confident that they could deal with the organization and planning phases, but they were doubtful about the gathering of donated materials and the actual construction efforts. A Crescent Court resident, Gladys Council, said, "As women we're stuck. We don't have the influence to get materials donated and we can't handle the tools and heavy work."

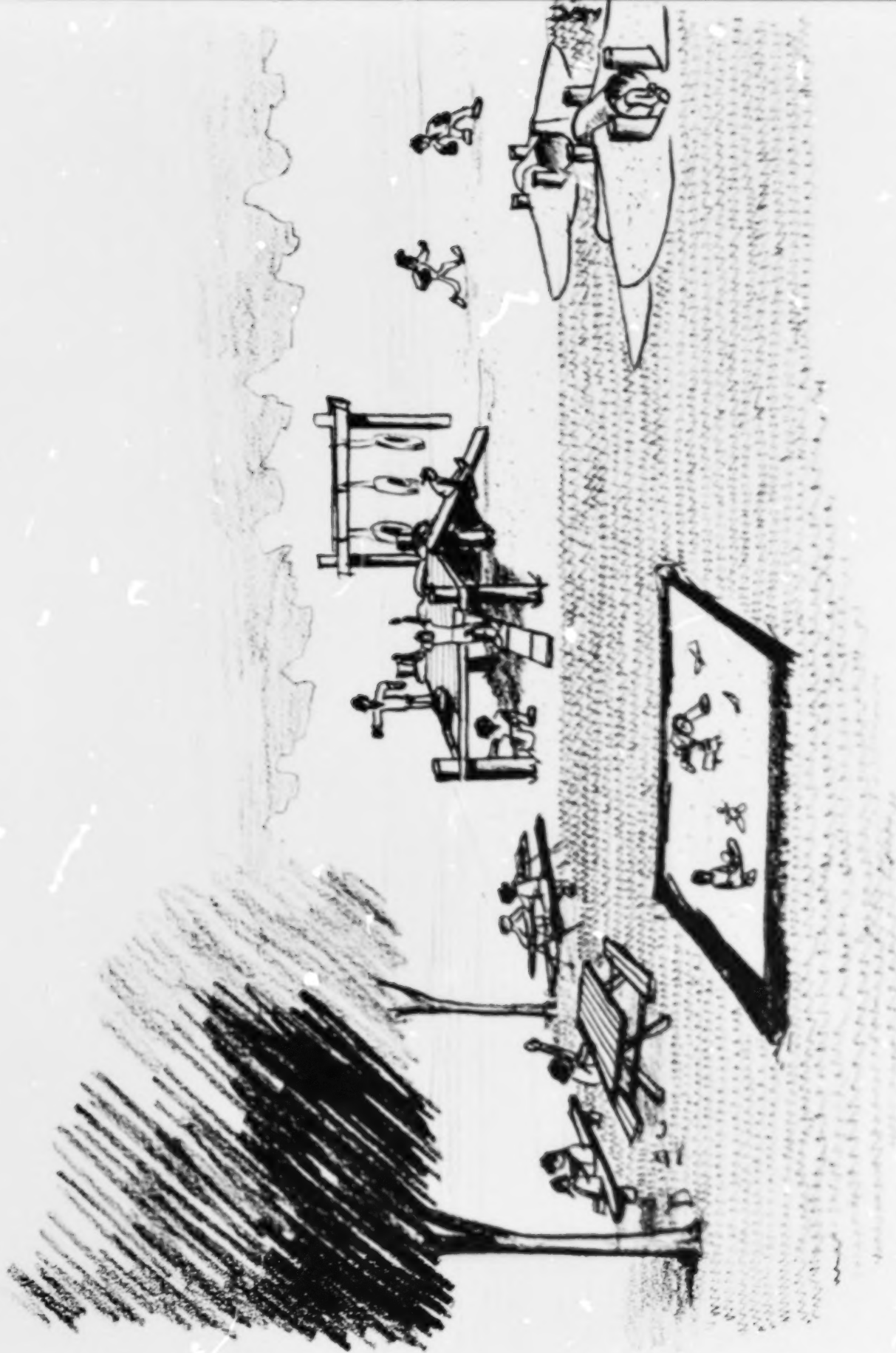
Plans were made to continue construction on December 12, but the snows came and winter drove the project indoors until spring.

PLAN FOR PLYMOUTH ST. PLAYGROUND BROCKTON, MASS.



PLYMOUTH STREET

4' CHAIN LINK FENCE



THE LONG WINTER OF CHARRETTE II

"What do they do, the fish and all, when that whole little lake's a solid block of ice . . . they can't just ignore it . . ."

"Nobody's ignoring it!" Horowitz said. He got so damn excited and all . . . "They live right in the goddam ice. It's their nature, for Chrissake. They get frozen right in one position for the whole winter."

*J. D. Salinger
"The Catcher In The Rye"*

Winter was approaching as the staff began to formulate plans for Charrette II. Because one of the objectives of Charrette I had been to involve the black minority, it was decided to seek the involvement of the Puerto Rican community in Charrette II. Because many of Brockton's estimated 1,000 Puerto Ricans lived in what was labeled the North Warren Avenue area, this was a factor considered in its selection as the site for Charrette II.

Attempting to learn from both the successes and failures of Charrette I, certain changes were instituted for Charrette II:

1. The area from which community representatives would be drawn would be greatly narrowed.
2. There would be fewer and hopefully more intensive and productive meetings.
3. The visibility of professionals at meetings would be decreased to emphasize community control.
4. Cynthia Donahue, a Spanish-speaking resident of Brockton, trained in community relations and familiar with the Puerto Rican Community was hired to assist the staff.
5. A neutral site was selected for the opening general meeting. When the East Side (Charrette I) general meeting was held at the Crescent Court Community Center, residents from other neighborhoods assumed incorrectly that the project was predestined for Crescent Court.

Miscalculation in the changes made? Winter and its endless, exhausting holidays? Apathetic indifference? Whatever - as Shakespeare said in *The Winter's Tale*. "A sad tale's best for winter." This, then, is the tale of Charrette II.

The general meeting, open to all interested residents of the North

Warren Avenue area was held in the hall of the Porter Congregational Church. A notice announcing the meeting was prominently published in the Brockton Enterprise; the staff personally canvassed the area; four hundred leaflets were distributed, some in Spanish.

Nine members of the North Warren community attended the meeting. No Puerto Ricans came.

The project was explained by Ron Barber and the community nodded their heads in silent, respectful acquiescence.

Dr. Leitman expressed his hope that, unlike Charrette I, this group could find a "new" site, one that was not an existing play area. He raised the possibility of creating "vest pocket" playgrounds or even using roof tops.

Those who lived in the area said that the housing and industry were packed too tightly and the only remaining possibility was to use a portion of Parmenter Playground. Parmenter was overgrown with tall grass, strewn with glass and contained only minimal play equipment - a slide and a few swings.

One older resident complained that the kids "nowadays" were too lazy to walk to Parmenter to play. Clover Thompson, the project's consulting architect turned and noted succinctly, "Maybe there's nothing there worth walking to!"

The meeting concluded with a walking tour of the neighborhood. Later, both staff and the professionals wondered aloud what had gone wrong. Nobody knew for sure. They hoped that with a determined effort they could make it better. They couldn't.

CHARRETTE II MEETINGS: SEARCHING FOR THE FORGOTTEN MAN

"These unhappy times call for the building of plans . . . that build from the bottom up and not from the top down, that put their faith once more in the forgotten man at the bottom of the economic pyramid."

*Franklin Delano Roosevelt
Radio Address, April 7, 1932*

At the first charrette meeting, it seemed better; eight community members attended, including two Puerto Rican men. Only three professionals were present in order not to intimidate or overwhelm the

community. The project was explained once again and there followed a good exchange of questions and answers from both sides, the community and the professionals.

Although no decisions were reached, the staff informed the charrette members that all of the suggested vacant sites had been explored and none were available for the project.

Attendance went downhill after the first meeting. And the Puerto Ricans never came again.

At the second meeting the charrette decided upon Parmenter Playground as the site. Unfortunately, this decision was reached by a process of elimination rather than selection.

Allan Leitman showed his playground slides and the community members, when pressed, said they favored the innovative, unconventional equipment as opposed to the standard swing-and-slide playground. Vandalism and the need for indestructible play equipment were discussed. The possibility of a teen center was raised and discarded.

Perhaps it was an oppressive feeling - having seen and heard it all before. Maybe the problem wasn't entirely the apathy of the community; maybe the staff and professionals thought that they could do it faster and better without the time consuming process of allowing people to reach their own answers. For whatever reason, everyone just seemed to be going through the motions of a charrette.

Although attendance had dwindled more by the third meeting, three high school girls provided some spark with their suggestion that a ship motif be used for the playground design. The meeting moved rapidly from idea to idea and at the end the design included a ship-shaped platform structure with rubber tire cargo nets, painted smoke stacks, a gangplank, ship's wheel, hatches, an anchor, docking ropes, rowboat sandboxes and a conduit submarine.

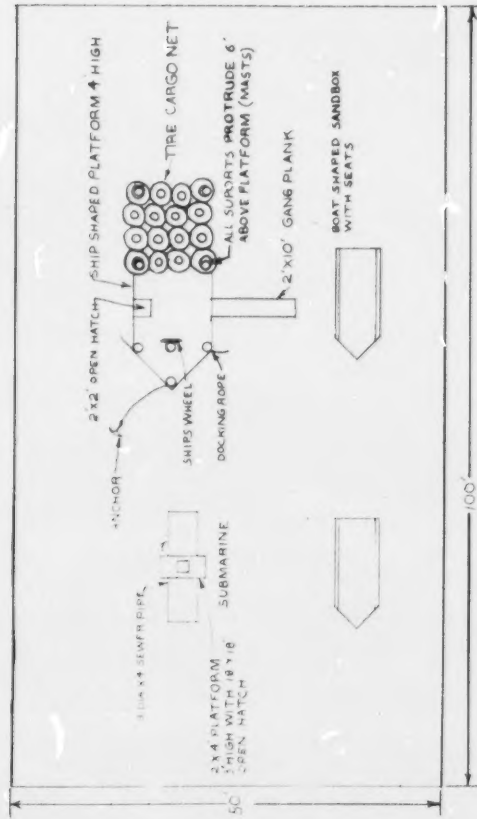
Terry D'Eugenio and Ron Barber said they would prepare a model incorporating the suggested items for the next meeting.

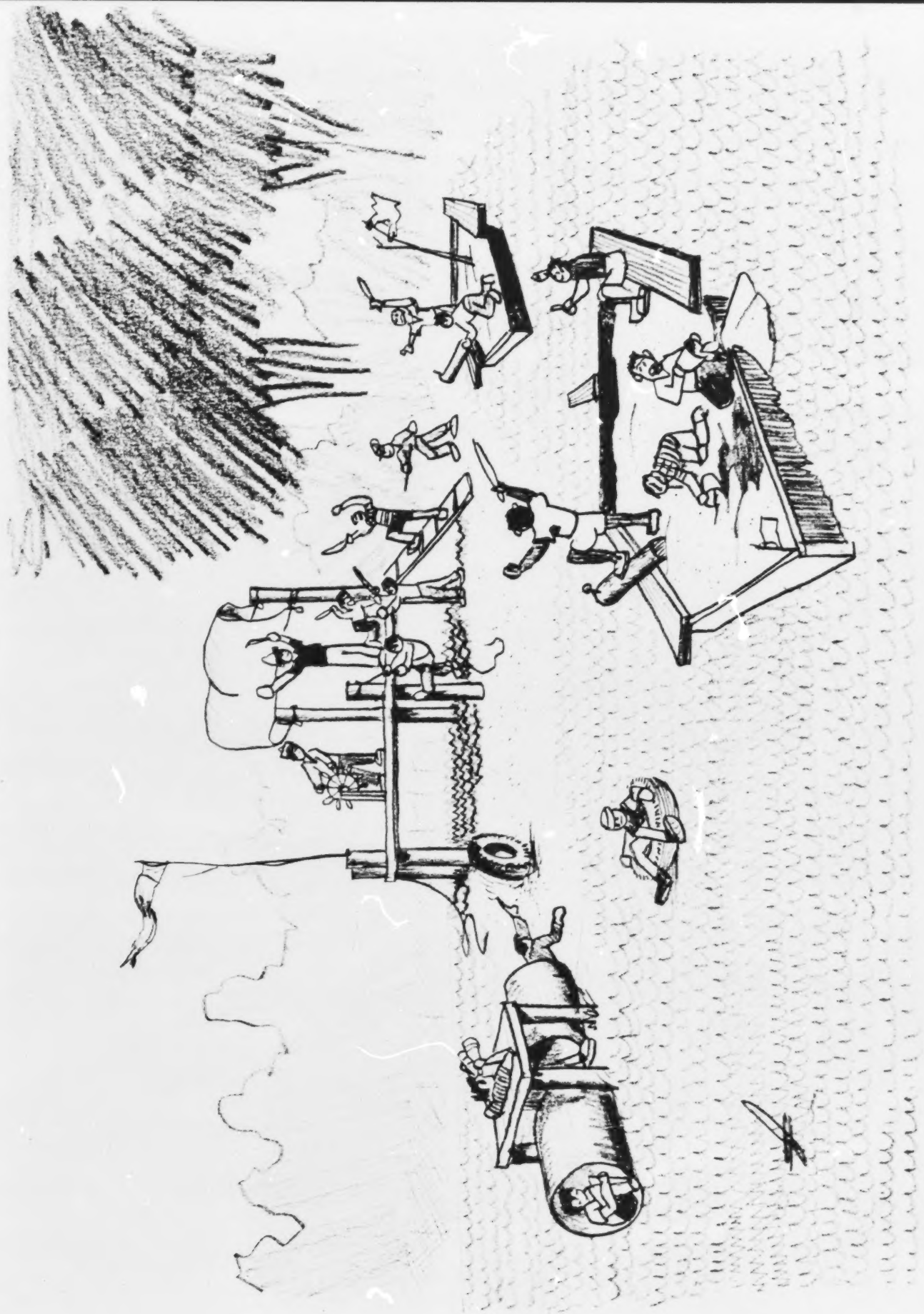
At the fourth meeting the community members, by now outnumbered by the professionals, all agreed that the prepared model accurately represented their suggestions. They admired the model so much that Allan Leitman suggested that his staff and the project's staff prepare model building kits for the final meeting so that everyone could experiment with building their own playground. Everyone seemed enthused by the idea.

The final, design meeting was scheduled for February 3, 1971, but nobody could attend. It was postponed until the following Tuesday night. Everything was ready. The kits - from balsa wood lumber to small scale tires - were spread across the conference table. The photographers from AEE were there; the professionals were ready. One member of the community showed up.

Ron Barber made some phone calls. He tracked down one of the members at a neighborhood pool hall - a sharply dressed black who carried his own cue with him in a case. He couldn't make it because he was losing at the table and had to make his money back. His was the best excuse. The long winter of Charrette II was over.

PLAN FOR PARMENTER ST. PLAYGROUND
BROCKTON, MASS.





TURNING TO YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

*"To dry one's eyes and laugh at a fall
And baffled, get up and begin again."*

Robert Browning
"Life in a Love"

The worst that winter could offer was over; now it was March and almost spring. It was time to begin again. The staff members were disappointed and discouraged. The term "citizen-participation" had turned sour and had begun to leave a bad taste in their mouths. After a frustrating evaluation of Charrette II, they decided to make a truly fresh beginning.

The one bright light in the planning sessions of Charrette II had been the contributions of the high school students. Why not ignore the apathetic adults altogether and give youth a chance to do it on their own for Charrette III?

Inquiries were made at Brockton High School to locate a teacher willing to donate his class time and assistance in an effort to involve the youth of the high school in the playground project.

Bill Burges, a bearded, dynamic young teacher was interested. Consequently, one morning early in March, Ron Barber and Allan Leitman explained the project with slides of the November construction to four of Burges's classes. The students, a mixture from freshman to seniors enrolled in Afro-American History, American Minorities, and Comparative Political and Economic Systems listened attentively.

Ron Barber explained that help was needed, first of all, to complete the construction of the Plymouth Street Playground. He asked how many would be willing to help. Sixty-three students volunteered. Many were black. Some of them lived in the housing project across the street from the Plymouth Street Playground.

PLYMOUTH STREET PLAYGROUND:

REVISITED — MARCH 30 & 31, 1971

*"And frosts are slain and flowers begotten
And in green underwood and cover*

Blossom by blossom the spring begins."

Algernon Swinburne
"Atlanta in Calydon"

The sixty-three student volunteers were divided into two groups. Soon, arrangements were made with the school administration to release the students from their classes and a group was bused in each day on March 30 and 31. The winds of March still lingered, but the days were sunny and the frost was gone. Spring had come at last.

Unexpectedly, another objective of the project had been achieved - there was local funding for construction. A sum of \$3,000 had been approved for the project by the city of Brockton and included in the Recreation Department's budget for 1971. Lumber, sand, nuts and bolts were this time, bought and paid for. But the telephone poles, tires, woodchips, unassembled park benches and tables were donated. Tools and equipment were borrowed from the Park and Recreation Departments or provided by the students themselves.

In two days of approximately four working hours apiece, the Plymouth Street playground was completed. Each day the groups were a fairly even mixture of boys and girls, blacks and whites. They worked well together and, because the work was fun, they played some too, and "horsed around" together. There were the inevitable transistor radios, brief "pepper" games with an old baseball and some "testing" done of the new play equipment. After a playful tugging match on the banks of a nearby stream, some of the participants emerged somewhat dampened of clothes, if not of spirit.

But the work progressed rapidly. The builders were not small children this time, but young adults. They needed little instruction or guidance by Terry D'Eugenio. Some were familiar with the tools and strong enough to handle the heavy work themselves.

There was, however, a slow-down after noon on the first day. Unbeknown to the project planners, March 30th was a half-day of school for the small children of the neighborhood. When they saw their friends Ron Barber and Terry D'Eugenio back with their tools, tires and cameras, the little ones swarmed over the area. Some pleaded for tools and a chance to help; others climbed through, over and under the play structures during construction; others pulled on the sleeves of the older boys asking them to throw the ball around or boost them onto the swings.

The student volunteers accepted it all in stride. They played with children who wanted to be played with and they relinquished their tools and guided the youngsters who wanted to work. Perhaps the

children slowed down the work, but it would be their playground - they had that right.

The work went quickly on the second day and the lost time was made up. At lunchtime the proprietor of the submarine shop on the corner became curious and asked Bill Burges what all the high school kids were up to. Bill told him. From then on the sodas were on the house.

When the busload of students left at the end of the second day, they left a finished playground behind them, which included:

1. A rubber tire "cargo net" bolted and attached to the platform with steel cable.
2. An interconnecting tire swing that hangs free from an overhead support.
3. A conduit tunnel covered with sand.
4. A Lincoln log sandbox with surrounding benches.
5. Two park tables and benches.
6. Cable spools for balancing and rolling.
7. An area cleaned of trash and rocks.
8. A coat of varnish on all smooth wood surfaces.
9. A pile of sand for free play.
10. A cushioning layer of woodchips around the play structure.

In addition, since the construction on November 11, 1970, the playground had been separated from the street by Park Department fencing. Two new basketball courts were to be installed by the Park and Recreation Departments in early summer and then all of the play areas would be bounded by fencing. The project staff, now with funds available, ordered two indestructible barbecue stoves to be installed to encourage adult use of the area in the summer.

While the staff and consultants were gathering up their tools, the playground was again besieged in large numbers by small children just released from school. Ron Barber, a staff member and resident of the neighborhood knew many of them as well as their parents; he warned that they were risking a whipping if they didn't go home and change to their play clothes. Smiling they seemed to think that it was worth the risk.

The staff and consultants watched them crawl through the tunnels, dive in the sandbox and duck in and out of the tires. That good feeling

of accomplishment that seemed to come only after construction was back again. And because of the students' enthusiasm at the construction, everyone was positive that a Youth Charrette would be a sure winner.

PREPARING FOR THE YOUTH CHARRETTE

*"Spring is a call to action, hence
to disillusion, therefore April
is called 'the cruellest month'."*

*Cyril Connolly
"The Unquiet Grave"*

On April 1, 1971, the smiling black and white faces of the Brockton High School students working together on a playground project appeared in the local paper. Four days later many of the same faces made the front page of the Boston newspapers. This time, however, the pictures were of a racial confrontation involving more than 2000 students on the grounds of the high school as the schoolday ended. *The Boston Globe's* report after the incident stated:

"The melee quelled only after police used tear gas, was touched off by several fistfights involving black and white students, and subsequent reprisals by both groups. The violence . . . erupted after two black youths allegedly assaulted a white substitute teacher outside an assembly hall several weeks before.

Two days after the near-riot, however, black and white students hashed over their differences in 'rap' sessions and restored tranquility at the school, which cost \$17 million and is the largest high school east of the Mississippi."

Following the success of the construction project using student labor, the project staff and administration had decided to make Charrette III a Youth Charrette and have the youth plan and design the next playground and not merely serve as a labor force. High hopes were rampant until the racial incidents disrupted all of the plans.

For a week the atmosphere in Brockton, and particularly at the high school, was tense and electric. In order to discuss the possible effect of the disorders on the feasibility of scheduling of the Youth Charrette,

Ron Barber and Paul Gallagher set out to see Bill Burges at the high school.

After the tension had eased and the process of preparing for the Youth Charrette had been restarted, Bill Burges did have one encouraging story to relate. He had spoken at one of the student "rap" sessions during the "troubles" and had used the slides of the students at the playground construction to demonstrate the good that could be accomplished if blacks and whites cooperated and worked together. He said that the students, black and white, applauded the slide presentation with a standing ovation.

Before the plans for the Youth Charrette had been crystalized, Self-Help of Brockton had approached the project staff seeking assistance in building a playground at the Copeland School - a child development and day-care center funded through Head Start. It would be a playground for pre-school children attending the Copeland School as well as for use by children in the neighborhood. Self-Help had tried to organize a community participation project early in December, but this project was another casualty of the "long winter".

The OCPG administration and the project staff agreed to help under two conditions: that the students provide planning and design input and not be used simply as a labor force, and that the students themselves agree on the Copeland School location.

Bill Burges selected twenty-five interested and hard-working students from the earlier volunteers to serve on the charrette. They were separated into four task forces; each group visited the Copeland School facilities and the planning offices of the OCPG on the week of April 12, 1971, to familiarize them with the possibilities at the Copeland School and give them an in-depth look at the planning process of the project.

At the end of that week the students were gathered together at the high school during their lunch period and Jack Sims, director of the OCPG tried to elicit comments, suggestions or questions the students had concerning the planning phase of their project. Nobody had anything to say.

Once again, the speculations and rationalization began. Perhaps they were uncomfortable because they were from different classes and didn't know each other? Perhaps the adults intimidated or inhibited them? Perhaps the large group was too unwieldy for effective discussion? Perhaps they needed more "education" in the planning and design of

playgrounds before they would feel confident enough to offer their own opinions.

The staff huddled and decided to break the charrette down into three smaller discussion groups that would meet at different times on the following week at the OCPG office. It was hoped that with smaller, more intimate discussion groupings the staff could more informally accomplish some preliminary "brain-picking" of the students and also inform them of what the staff had learned in the course of the project. The meetings, because time was running short, were scheduled for the spring vacation week. The students saw this, when pressed for comment, that the vacation would be no problem.

A total of just five students appeared for three scheduled meetings and only one apparently constructive suggestion came out of the meetings. Janice Urbano suggested that it would probably be best to schedule the planning and construction work during lunch hours and class time and not after school or on Saturdays. The staff agreed. The first formal meeting of the Youth Charrette was scheduled for Tuesday, April 27, 1971 in the high school - at lunchtime.

THE YOUTH CHARRETTE: CREATING A PLAYGROUND

"The whole difference between construction and creation is exactly this: that a thing constructed can only be loved after it is constructed; but a thing created is loved before it exists."

Gilbert Keith Chesterton
Preface to *Dicken's*
Pickwick Papers

Fifteen high school students attended the first formal Youth Charrette meeting on April 27 at Brockton High School. Jack Sims opened the meeting by welcoming the volunteers into the project and emphasized once again that they were no longer just a construction force, but a charrette, and as such would be responsible for not only building but also planning and designing the next playground.

This time the students were more vocal. They approved locating the playground at the Copeland School but vetoed three play equipment

suggestions made by the Child Development staff at the Copeland School because they considered them too dangerous for small children.

The students made some equipment recommendations of their own and, tentatively scheduled the first construction for Friday, May 14.

A second charrette meeting was held two days later on April 29. Terry D'Eugenio, the construction expert from AEE conducted the meeting. He began by asking what types of activities they would like the Copeland School playground to provide. He listed the students' suggestions on the blackboard. They included:

1. Climbing
2. Vehicular (wagons, bikes)
3. Sand
4. Water
5. Crawling
6. Hiding

Dr. Leitman of AEE stressed that the primary users of the play area would be children from three to six and equipment suggestions should be geared to that age level. A student suggested constructing a platform such as the one they built at Plymouth Street and Allan Leitman said that this would be an instance where the design should be scaled down to accommodate smaller children.

After lengthy discussion and many suggestions, a rough plan was formulated with the following basic equipment inclusions:

1. A pole and tire structure
2. A conduit tunnel
3. A platform structure
4. Enclosed cable spools
5. A tire climber

To finalize the plan for the playground and the equipment designs, the consultant recommended that a small volunteer design committee be formed and meet the following week. Eight students volunteered.

After the meeting had adjourned and the students had returned to their classes, Allan Leitman asked if there had been any encouraging "after effects" following the Plymouth Street construction. Bill Burges replied that several of his students had taken their parents to view the completed structure and Ron Barber added that he had seen one of the high school boys taking three of his younger brothers there to play, obviously proud of the playground.

The student design committee met on May 3, and in a two-and-one-

half hour session completed the plan and design for the Copeland School playground.

At the meeting, Robert Gracias, a staff member from the Copeland School Child Development Center, provided the dimensions of the available area. Blackboards and large sketch pads were used to sketch designs and list the tools and materials necessary to build each piece of equipment.

The major pieces of play equipment designed were:

1. Tunnel Structure: Three lengths of conduit separated by wood platforms, covered with foam held by staggered lengths of telephone poles.
2. Platform Structure: Three interconnected 6' square platforms, 4', 3' and 2' high, with tire climbers, a slide and gangplanks.
3. Spool Structure: Two large cable spools surrounded by 2 x 4 enclosures, joined to the 3' platform with a gangplank at the opposite end.
4. Pole and Tire Structure: Car tires strung horizontally from telephone poles with large truck tires strung vertically between for climbing and crawling. There would be stairs up one pole and a slide at the other end.
5. Tire Resiliency Walk: Tires of varying sizes and resiliency imbedded in the ground with a following hand rail.
6. Sandbox: Made 15' square with telephone poles connected in Lincoln log fashion and benches mounted on the sides.

Other alternate designs included a tire and cargo net climber, park benches, a bicycleway and a blackboard wall.

Bob Gracias was asked about the fence that enclosed the blacktop play area behind the school. He said that the fence would be moved back to encompass the new playground but assured the students that its purpose would be to keep the small Copeland School children in and not to keep the neighborhood children out.

Concluding the skull session, Terry D'Eugenio said that he and Ron Barber would make small scale models of all the final designs so that the students could approve them and arrange them in the play area plan.

THE COPELAND SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION

*"A little work, a little play,
To keep us going - and so,
good-day!"*

*George Louis Palmella
Busson Du Maurier*

It had been a cold, miserable spring so far; the lilacs and many of the early flowers hadn't bothered to blossom yet. But Friday, May 14, finally erased the lingering memory of winter. The day was sunny and hot - almost sultry.

Because of the extensive pre-planning and logistics work done by Ron Barber, Terry D'Eugenio and Fran Danis of the Child Development Center, everything was ready to go when the student motorcade pulled up in front of the Copeland School at 8:30 that morning. Ron Barber and Charles Rowe, planner for OCPC, had staked the area, defining the boundaries of each piece of equipment, and a post-hole digger provided by the Brockton Edison had dug all the necessary holes in the rocky ground. A load of sand and loam had been delivered and more would follow later in the day.

The tools and equipment provided by the custodian of Copeland School AEE and the Brockton Recreation Department and Water Department were on hand and scale models of each play structure were placed at their designated locations to be used as construction guides.

By now, the thirty-one student volunteers were experienced in the construction techniques and had been involved in the detailed designing of the play structures. The work went quickly. They worked in teams lugging massive telephone poles, shoveling loam over the tunnel, drilling tires, sawing wood, cutting poles, pounding nails and varnishing wood surfaces.

It was apparent at once that this time the students were more knowledgeable and confident. They made their own construction suggestions and improvised design changes. They spoke easily and with assurance to curious visitors from the neighborhood, the School Department and the local newspapers.

However, once again, it was not all drudgery - there was still time for fun. There was the blare of portable radios, soda runs, sand slinging and good-natured "horse play". It was a good day. When it was over, everyone was surprised that the job had been nearly completed in such a short time span.

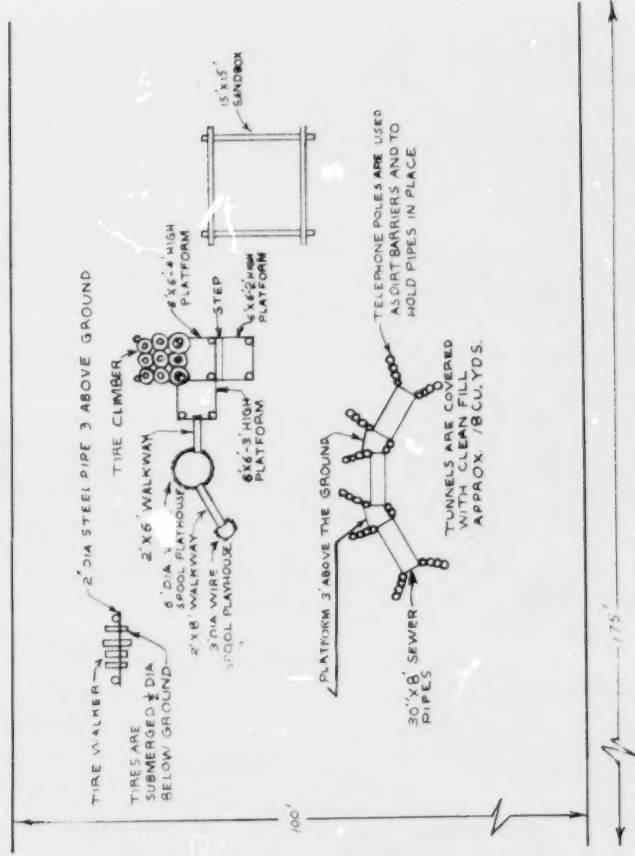
They had completed, according to their plan:

1. The tunnel structure
2. Platform structure
3. Spool structure
4. The tire resiliency walk
5. The sandbox

Only the pole and tire structure remained to be finished and its completion was scheduled for a later date.

The Youth Charrette had been an exhilarating experience for those who worked on the project. It had wiped out the disappointing memory of the "long winter" of Charrette II. With spirits raised, but time rapidly running out, the project staff decided to make one last-ditch effort directed at Charrette II.

PLAN FOR COPELAND SCHOOL PLAYGROUND BROCKTON, MASS.



ENDING

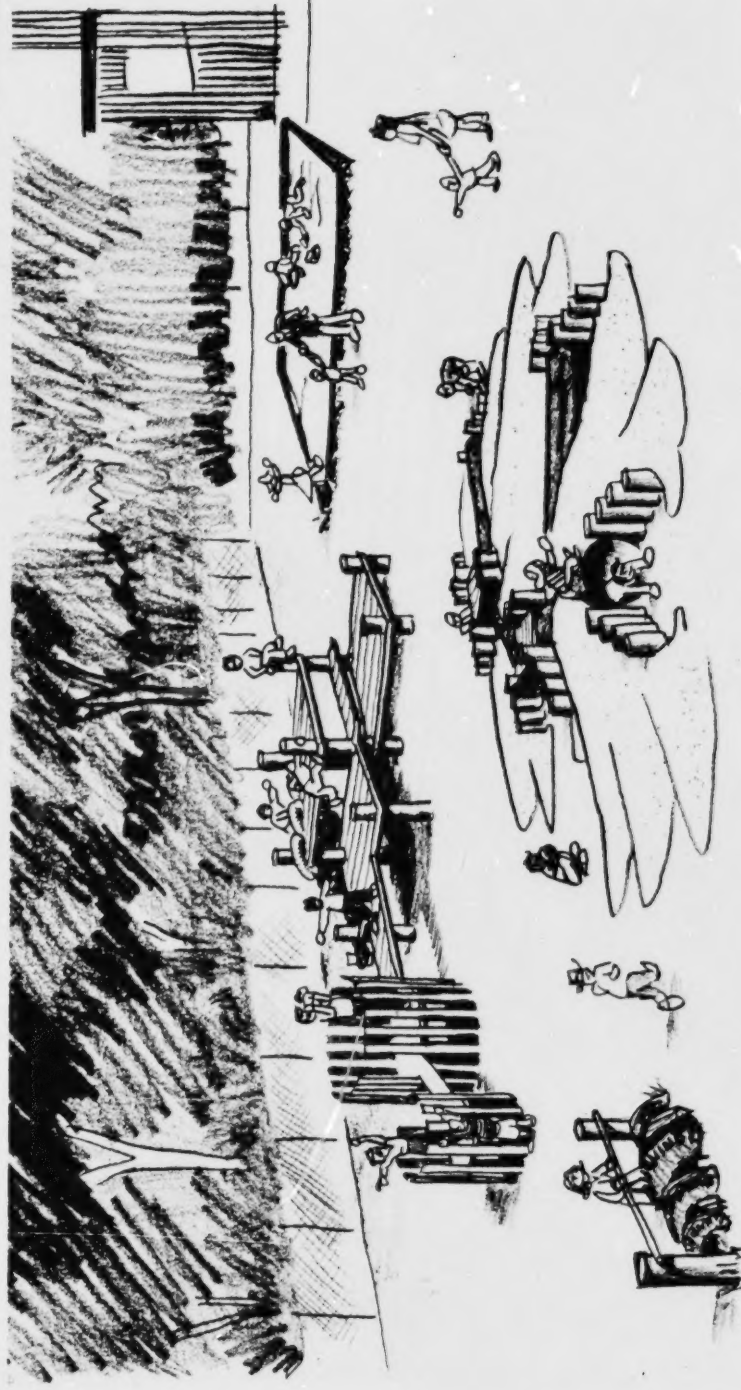
"Pass me the can, lad; there's an end of May."

*A.E. Housman
"Last Poems"*

The final effort to elicit enough support from the members of Charrette II to actually construct the playground that they had planned and designed was, once again, a failure. A construction meeting was scheduled for the evening of May 26; only two charrette members attended. The school year was drawing to a close and no more field trips were allowed for the last few days of classes at Brockton High School: the students could not build the playground for the North Warren community. The disappointed project staff reluctantly cancelled the construction of Charrette II's playground.

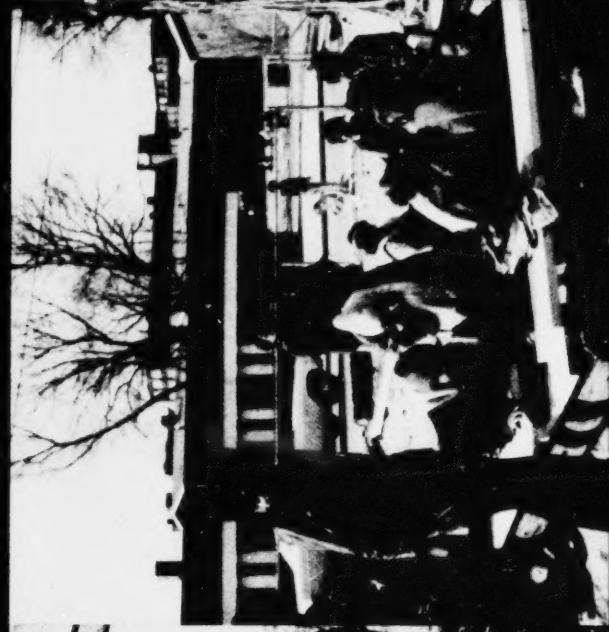
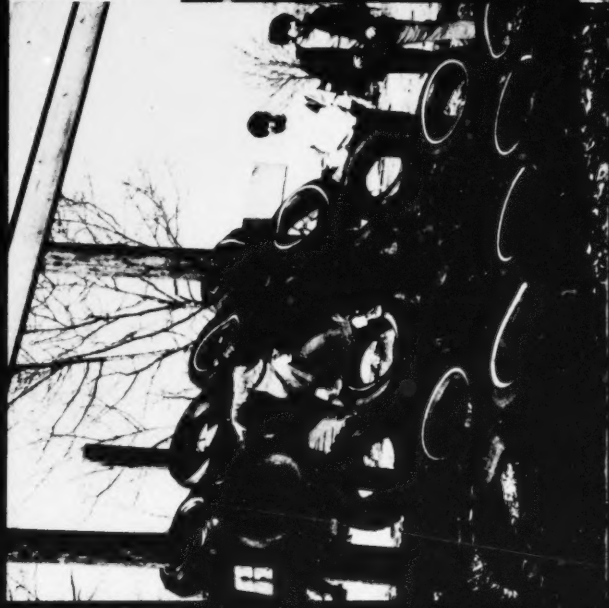
In the final days of the project, the staff directed its efforts toward the future. Meetings were held with the administration of the Brockton Y.M.C.A. to interest them in continuing the experiment in community planned and constructed playgrounds. Also, assistance was offered to the Southeastern Regional planning office which was undertaking a playground project in the New Bedford-Fall River area. The project writer prepared an application for fiscal year 1971-72 to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare for a small grant to introduce the project's concept to other Massachusetts communities.

In June 1971 the experiment in citizen participation in the planning, design and construction of playgrounds ended in Brockton, Massachusetts. Hopefully, what was started there will continue, and what was learned there will prove of value to other communities willing to undertake the challenge of this experiment.





III. Summary and Critique



SUMMARY AND CRITIQUE

"Tut, tut, child," said the Duchess.

*"Everything's got a moral if only
you can find it."*

Lewis Carroll

"Alice's Adventures in Wonderland"

In the original application submitted for federal funding, the intent of the project was stated in terms of fourteen objectives. These objectives could be condensed into one simplified statement of intent: To involve the adults and youth of Brockton with planning and recreation professionals in the planning and design of possibly three innovative playgrounds in the inner-city. After the project had begun, the goal of construction was added to the list.

Approximately 150 lay citizens, most of them young, and thirty professionals were involved in the project. Two complete playgrounds containing innovative uses of old tires, discarded telephone poles and conduit pipe were planned and designed. Despite the fact that the HUD grant did not provide funds for construction, two playgrounds were built using primarily donated materials and volunteer, community labor forces in the inner-city of Brockton.

Despite the frustrations, disappointments and doubts incurred in the course of a year, the project did successfully fulfill the intent and objectives specified in the application for funding, and, in fact, expanded upon it with actual construction.

Now that it is over, it is easier to be more reflective and objective. Novices should be cautioned about their first experiences in community organization and citizen participation. The catch-phrase "citizen participation" has such an innocent, mother-and-apple pie flavor to it.

Guidelines from HUD, planning journal articles and well-meaning lecturers on the luncheon circuit speak of the virtues of citizen participation and demand its incorporation into the governmental structure. But no one cautions about its pitfalls and disappointments. No one warns the starry-eyed idealists that "the road less travelled by" is a rough and treacherous one.

It is not that the road should be avoided. But the planner should be forewarned to proceed slowly, brace for the bumps and have guidelines for repairing punctured hopes and dreams.

The technique this project utilized to implement citizen participation is the "charrette process". It is not an entirely new technique. Simply, it's a team of professionals and laymen working together.

Many ideas and guidelines gleaned from prior efforts, such as the Baltimore High School charrette which planned a large urban high school, were incorporated into the planning and execution of this Brockton playground project, but the concept was expanded in Brockton to include experimentation in citizen participation that broadens the charrette concept.

Although other charrette experiments have perhaps dealt with more expansive problems than playgrounds, such as master plans, urban renewal and new high schools, their involvement with the community never reached to the stage of having the community accomplish the technical design and actual construction of the project planned.

To be sure, a community cannot be expected to design and build a new high school with the ease of conducting an old fashioned barn raising, as it can a playground made of scrap lumber and telephone poles. People involved in the Brockton project planned a playground according to their own recreational and educational criteria, designed the play equipment and brought it to a reality. During these planning, design and construction phases, they were assisted by a multidisciplinary team of community action consultants and planning professionals. It is felt that through this approach and use of these techniques, higher community participation priorities such as housing, education and social problems could be dealt with more effectively.

How this conception of the charrette process was implemented in Brockton has been described in the accounts of the three charrettes earlier in this report. To evaluate the successes and failures of this concept's application, they must be examined separately.

Charrette I — The East Side

In the first charrette the educational experience learned from the charrette process was rewarding for both the laymen and professionals — particularly the project staff.

The charrette concept was new to both sides of the table as the project began. The design and recreation experts passed on to the community their insights and experience and the East Side community, in turn, educated the professionals about their needs, fears, attitudes and their willingness to involve themselves in community development efforts.

Both sides demonstrated shortcomings and failings. The experts had a

tendency to overwhelm the community with their sophistication. When meetings lost their direction, the experts found it hard to resist taking over and telling the community what it should do. At times it appeared that only Dr. Leitman had the patience to wait for the community to tell him what *they* wanted to do. Perhaps a stronger directive force, a person trained in group dynamics, could have avoided the meandering dialogue that created these difficulties.

The East Side community also contributed its share of shortcomings. Despite a heavy publicity campaign advertising the general meeting, fewer than twenty adults showed enough interest to attend.

At the construction of the "visible structure" on November 11, the small children participated with frantic enthusiasm, but the parents stayed away.

In spite of these occasional set-backs, the first charrette was, on the whole, a successful venture. For once the professionals were given an opportunity to meet the people. The meetings were unstructured so they would be non-directive and encourage a free exchange of ideas. The rapport between both factions was always harmonious and friendly.

As a result of a good relationship the project was adapted when it became evident that the community was tired of "study" projects, and a playground for the East Side was not only planned and designed, but was constructed with community labor and an assist from the youth of Brockton High School.

Charrette II — North Warren Avenue

The second charrette never really seemed to get off the ground. The general meeting, again well publicized, attracted only nine members of the North Warren community. Much of the flyer distribution had been aimed at involving the Puerto Rican families in the area, but this support was never realized.

Because of the fear that the professionals and their numbers had at times inhibited the flow of discussion in Charrette I, their visibility was decreased in the meetings of Charrette II. Silent community members appeared to feel insecure and inferior because of their lack of knowledge and adopted a "whatever you professionals think is best for us" attitude.

A playground to be located at Parmenter field was planned and designed, primarily by the high school members of Charrette II, but because of the general unresponsiveness of the community all plans for construction were tabled - indefinitely.

Charrette III — Youth

Because the high school members of Charrette II had contributed much more than the adults toward the planning and design of the North Warren Avenue play area and because of the resultant discouragement with the adult involvement, the staff decided to make a dramatic shift in the project plan by making the third attempt a Youth Charrette.

In terms of accomplishment and the satisfaction afforded the staff and steering committee, the Youth Charrette was the most successful of all. Even in the very beginning the response of the youth was infectious. After a presentation of the project to four high school classes, sixty-three students volunteered to help complete the Plymouth Street playground begun earlier by Charrette I.

Naturally, there was some discouragement during the early meetings when those scheduled for non-school hours were poorly attended and the students remained tight-lipped and reluctant to express themselves, just as their "parents" had been. But the school officials were cooperative and meetings and construction dates were scheduled during school hours. The students became much more vocal about their points of view when the actual charrette meetings began.

There was a spiritual letdown suffered by the project staff following the disorder at the high school and the subsequent tension and demonstrations, but even this was allayed by the standing ovation given by black and white students following the showing of the Plymouth Street playground construction slides at one of the tension-easing "rap" sessions.

The students' accomplishments were great. After two days of assistance in finishing the Plymouth Street playground they went on to plan, design and construct their "own" playground at the Copeland School. They volunteered to assist in the construction of Charrette II's playground in the North Warren area even though that project was finally cut short by lack of time and interest on the part of the Charrette II neighborhood.

It was a great demonstration that the high school youths are more than willing to involve themselves in worthwhile community projects if given the chance. Hopefully, they will be given more chances in the future.

Finally, no summary would be complete without singling out for special praise Bill Burges of the High School Science Department. He turned the key to open the project up to youth; his rapport with the kids "turned them on" to the charrette concept. Perhaps more than any other individual he made it possible.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Citizen participation using the charrette process in community development efforts such as the planning, design and construction of playgrounds is indeed a worthwhile endeavor. In today's climate of growing alienation to government projects, it may even become a necessity.

In the process of organizing and employing citizen participation in this project, it was learned that it is better to seek out those citizens in city neighborhoods who have already demonstrated an involvement in community affairs and established a power base in the community. The citizen who has to be continually cajoled into attending meetings and prodded into contributing will rarely be a productive asset to the process. Without a nucleus of involved community members, the charrette never truly speaks for or represents the community as a whole.

Knowledgeable and well-prepared playground consultants equipped with an abundance of graphic displays are necessary early in the meeting phase of the project to educate the community to the benefits of innovative design using available native materials in low-cost construction.

People are tired of and frustrated by the continuum of governmental "study" projects. To gain their interest and involvement in a project, something concrete and tangible must be offered so that their efforts are not viewed as another go-around futility. If playgrounds are to be studied and planned then playgrounds must be built. Perhaps part of the apathy of Charrette II resulted from the difficulty of seeing a construction in May at a meeting table in December.

The meetings should be held in a fixed time period, and during the meetings the community should be allowed the time to find their own way and make their own mistakes. The professionals should be careful not to overwhelm or intimidate the community by weight of numbers or by dominating the exchange of ideas and opinions. The construction phase should follow the meeting phase with as little time lag as is practically possible.

The decision as to whether to organize a youth charrette or an adult charrette depends upon the particular ends that are sought. The adult charrette drawn from the community where the play area will be located assures the best possible climate for acceptance for the playground. This selection of a youth charrette affords the students a community development and involvement experience not available to them in the confines of their own high school classes. The youth also are a more mobile and dependable labor force that can guarantee rapid and extensive construction completion.

Construction itself is the most rewarding experience offered by these projects. With the city department and private companies providing the materials, the adults and children of the neighborhood providing the muscle and the consultants supplying the skill, the goodwill engendered by working together for community betterment, reminiscent of old-time barn raisings, is perhaps the most valuable spin-off of the project.

But construction is only a beginning. The project staff and consultants serve as a midwife assisting the community to give birth to a playground, but even the best designed and constructed playground will fall into disrepair if the community does not assume the responsibility for its maintenance and supervision. The Plymouth Street playground will be maintained by the Recreation Department and will be staffed with playground counsellors in the summer months. The Child Development staff at the Copeland School will maintain the playground built on their land and supervise the play of their students. They have already planned an expansion of the play facilities. Ron Barber has organized small community work details to clean up the two play sites and paint the structures. It is hoped that the communities will continue these efforts after the conclusion of this project.

For the future in Brockton, it has been proposed and construction of the Y.M.C.A. that they continue the planning and construction of innovative play areas in the inner-city using adult and/or youth participation. It has also been recommended that a course on playground construction, taught by the staff of the Advisory for Educational Environments, be incorporated into the curriculum of Brockton High School, so that a youth cadre can be formed to build playgrounds in Brockton and introduce the project's concepts to their peers in the surrounding area's high schools.

Because of the publicity flowing from the Brockton experiment, other communities and institutions requested information and assistance in beginning similar projects. A sampling includes:

Boston School For The Deaf	—	Randolph, Mass.
Teen Center	—	North Easton, Mass.
Booster Club	—	Randolph, Mass.
Happy Hollow School	—	Wayland, Mass.
Y.M.C.A.	—	Brockton, Mass.
South Congregational Church	—	Brockton, Mass.
New Bedford Planning Office	—	New Bedford, Mass.
Perkins St. Community Group	—	Brockton, Mass.
School Department	—	Taunton, Mass.
Copeland School Parents Assoc.	—	Brockton, Mass.

IV. Appendices



These and other groups could only be given minimal assistance because of staffing and time limitations. Those communities included in the Old Colony planning region will be given continuing assistance by the OCPC staff and others have been offered voluntary assistance by the disbanded project staff members.

This report will be distributed to various community organizations and recreation departments throughout the area in hopes that it can serve as a guide to others willing to undertake similar projects using adult and youth participation. Additional materials on play facilities and construction techniques will be available on request from the Old Colony Planning Council office and the offices of the Advisory For Educational Environments. A list of supplemental materials, including booklets describing funds available from government and private sources, is included in the bibliography of this report.

HOW-TO MANUAL

In order to provide some guide to communities, organizations or institutions that may be interested in attempting this experiment in building playgrounds using citizen participation, a brief, outlined "How-To Manual" has been included as an appendix to this report.

Funding

Federal Funds: This project was financed by a \$17,000 grant from HUD under their "701" Program for Special Projects. A proposal for funding to introduce the experiment and build playgrounds in other communities has been prepared for submission to HEW under their Small Grant (up to \$10,000) program. Copies of these applications are available for reference from the office of the Old Colony Planning Council, 27 Belmont Street, Brockton, Massachusetts.

Other suggestions for federal funds are described in a booklet published by the Department of the Interior Bureau of Outdoor Recreation entitled, "Federal Assistance in Outdoor Recreation". See also: references below to Self-Help under the section "Private Funds".

Local Government Funds: Funding for playground construction can be obtained from city or town recreation departments. The necessary financing to complete the Plymouth Street playground was obtained from the Brockton Recreation Department. The

school department can be another source, particularly under the Community School concept.

Private Funds: Many organizations and clubs are more than willing to donate play equipment or construction funds. Some sample suggestions would be:

Chamber of Commerce
Junior Chamber of Commerce
Rotary Club
Lions Club
Elks Club
Y.M.C.A.
Boy and Girl Scouts
Churches

This project obtained funding for the construction at Copeland School from Self-Help, Inc. of Brockton a regional OEO program, but they were approached and dealt with as a local community sponsor.

Other available private funding opportunities are suggested in the booklet published by the Department of the Interior Bureau of Outdoor Recreation entitled, "Private Assistance in Outdoor Recreation: A Directory of Organizations Providing Aid to Individuals and Public Groups".

Without Funds: It is very possible to build a complete playground using, native, discarded or donated materials. Many of the materials used for construction in this project, including sand, telephone poles, old tires, slides, and lumber were donated. This approach is discussed later in the "Construction" section of this manual, but it should be noted here that with initiative and perserverance, a playground can be constructed without funds.

Organizing The Community

Community Charrette: The town, organization or institution should begin by gathering expertise. If money is available, hire a playground consultant. Graphics, slides, models and diagrammed equipment designs can be invaluable in gaining the initial interest of the community. It is also a good idea to form a steering committee composed of parks and recreation officials, school administrators, planners, an architect - people who have experience in recreation and design.

An area lacking in recreational opportunities which is small

enough to have a community or neighborhood identity should be selected and a general meeting for the residents scheduled. For publicity, newspaper articles, flyers, posters in local businesses and particularly door to door solicitation of the community are recommended. Great attention should be devoted to enlisting the involvement of the active members or recognized leaders, particularly males, from the community. All ages should be invited.

The presentation of the aims of the playground project should be simple and direct, emphasizing community control in the planning and design phases and guaranteeing that it is not another "study" project but a construction project. Use whatever visual aids are available to excite their imagination.

Let the community members be heard by allocating most of the time for, and directing them into discussion and participation.

Youth Charrette: Every high school has at least one young, dedicated teacher, such as Bill Burges, who can communicate with his students and is respected by them. Find one.

Present the project to appropriate classes (Social Studies, Government, Afro-American Studies, etc.) again relying heavily on visual aids. Then ask for volunteers. Out of four classes at Brockton High School, comprising about one hundred students, sixty-three volunteered to help with the construction at Plymouth Street.

Obtain permission from the school authorities to use school time for meetings and construction.

Conducting The Charrette

Depending on time, resources and the amount of participation desired from the community, set up a schedule in as compact a time period as possible. Perhaps one meeting will have to suffice, but it is recommended that there be four nightly meetings, once a week for a month - in a season where construction can follow the meeting phase as immediately as practicable. Schedule the meetings for the same day of the week and the same time each week to allow for reserving dates and to eliminate confusion. Send a written notice and call each member before each meeting for best results.

Have the professionals maintain a "low profile" during meetings so they do not overwhelm or intimidate the community. In this regard let the first meetings be unstructured so that the dialogue will flow freely and the community members will become involved.

Don't dictate to the community, but educate them as to the possibilities and advantages of construction using innovative designs and materials (low cost, ease of construction, uniqueness, etc.).

Let the community select a location, but bear in mind that, unless there is a grant available for purchasing private land, it is best to emphasize the public land locations. Make sure that permission is obtained to use the location selected for playground purposes from the public agency entrusted with the land.

Use sketch pads, blackboards and maps to diagram suggested equipment and locations. Finally, keep a written record of the meetings.

Construction

If the local community is the work force, schedule construction for a Saturday and Sunday of one weekend or on consecutive weekends. Make a particular effort to enlist adult males from the community. Try and make it a social occasion by providing refreshments.

With time, patience and supervision, it is altogether possible and most rewarding to have the small children of the neighborhood assist as was done when constructing the "visible structure" on Plymouth Street. It is a great work and play experience for them and gives them a feeling of possession and responsibility for the playground.

Tools can be obtained from the neighborhood residents or from the city departments of recreation, parks and water. Wheelbarrows, a chain saw, shovels and a drill should be obtained. The smaller tools are usually readily available.

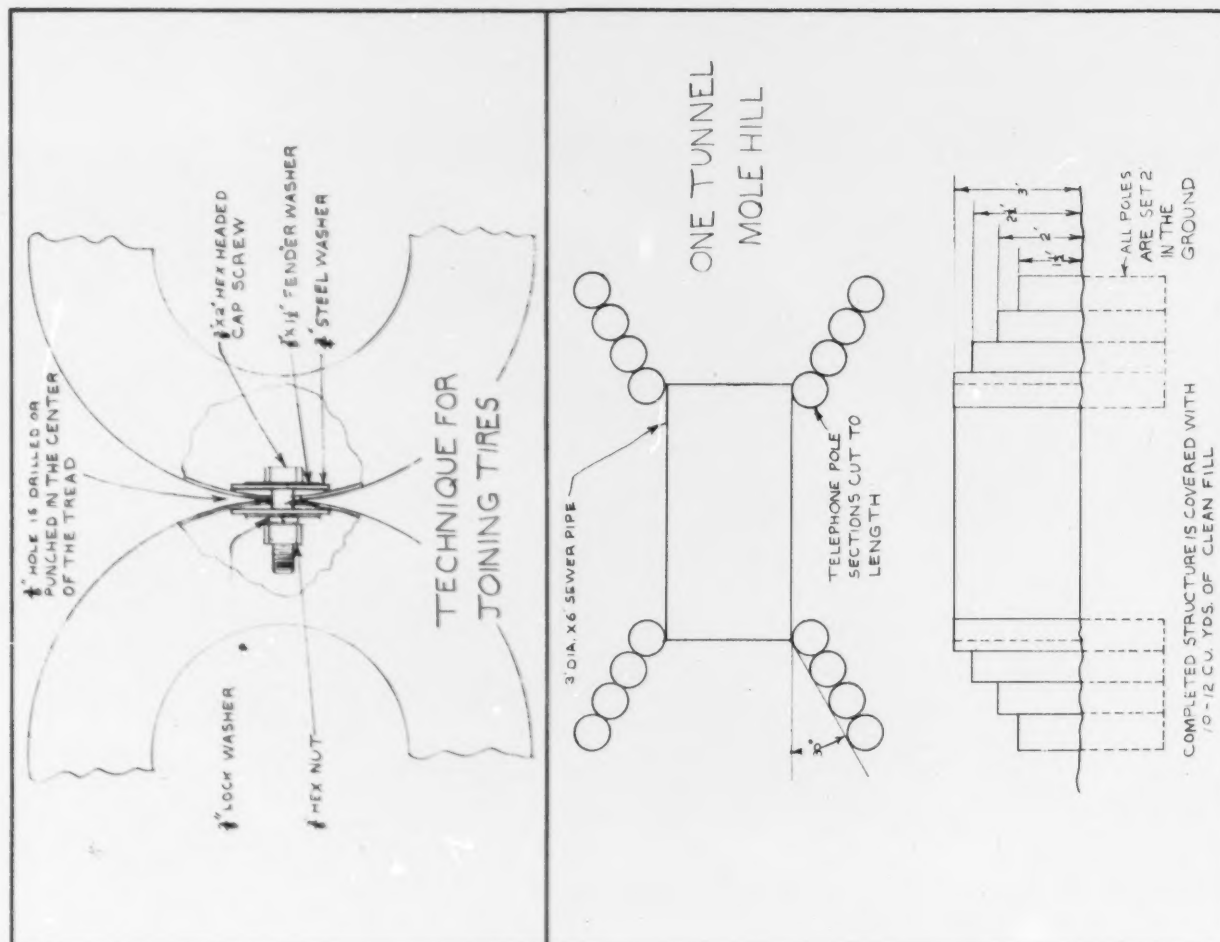
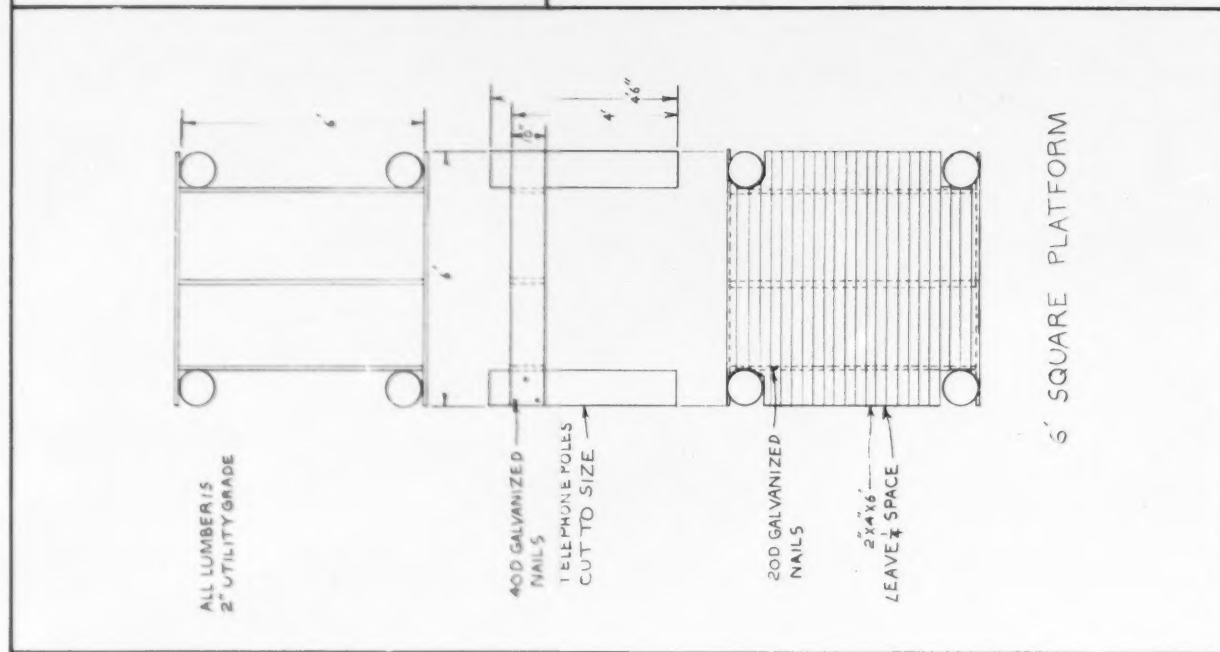
If there is enough money to purchase all of the necessary materials - fine. If not, with perservering phone calls, leg work and button-holing, donors can be found. In the Brockton project such items as sand, telephone poles, cable spools, lumber, used tires, slides, conduit pipe and park tables were all donated. All the materials should be on hand by the morning of construction and, if necessary, the post holes dug by the local telephone company.

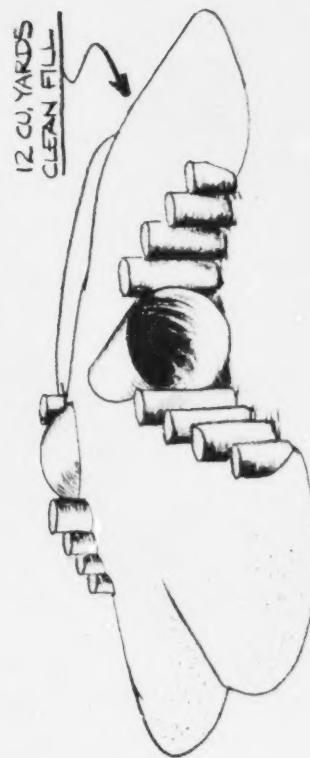
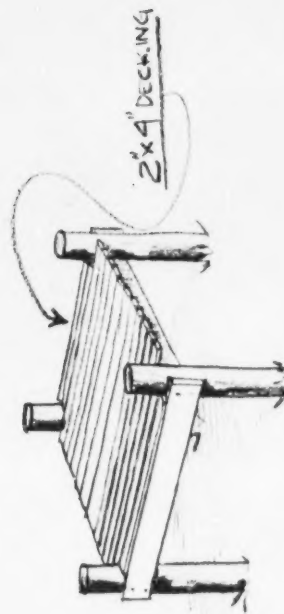
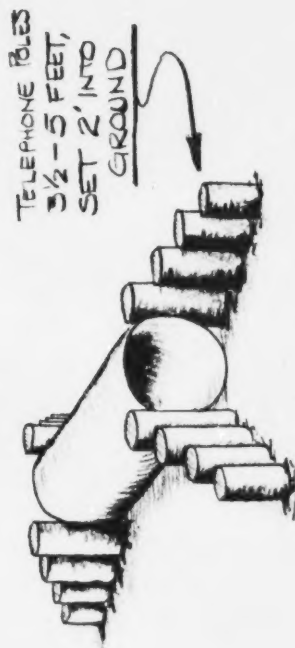
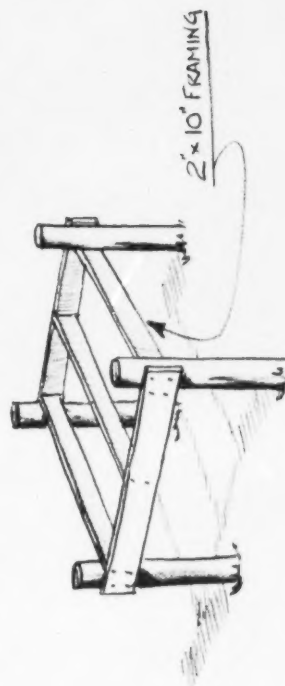
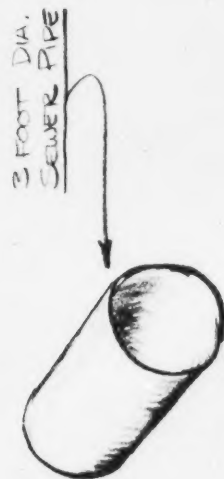
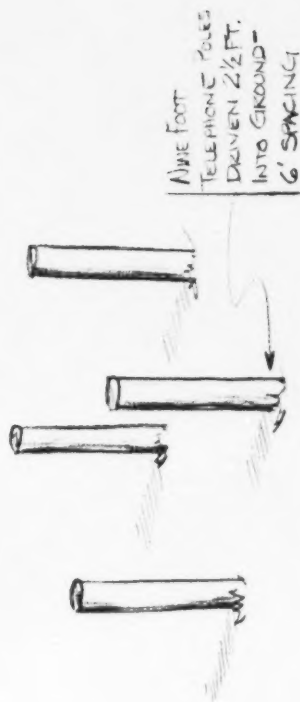
There should be sketches or models of each piece of play equipment available for reference.

If a youth charrette is building, the scheduled construction times should be during school hours with a teacher present. They should bring lunches and release forms from their parents.

The local newspapers should be contacted to cover the construction and take photos. People like to read their names in the newspaper. It is a small reward and encourages further efforts in the future.

It is important to establish maintenance and supervision arrange-





ments for the constructed playground. Either the community or the local recreation department should be entrusted with the continuing maintenance and policing of the playground. Every effort should also be made to gain a commitment from the recreation department to staff the play site with a counsellor during the summer months.

Additional Information

A representative account of the Brockton experiment and actual site plans for the three playgrounds precedes this manual, but a complete record of the minutes of the charrette and steering committee meetings and more detailed guidance are available from the Old Colony Planning Council office in Brockton.

The construction techniques for the three basic structures used in the Brockton sites — the platform, tire climber, conduit tunnel — with estimated costs, are diagrammed on the preceding pages, but other innovative technique information is available upon request from the offices of the Advisory For Educational Environments, 90 Sherman Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Project Participants

COMMUNITY:

Charrette I

Joan Fisher
Gladys Council
Loretta Simmons
William Humphrey
Dorothy Belcher
Henry Shanks

Sonny Shanks
L. Miller
Louis Angelo
Peter Koch
Margaret Urbano

Charrette II

Mary Graca
Martha Bradser
Arthur Hoke
Daniel Matta
Helen McAllister
Maureen McLaughlin

Patricia Platenik
Kim Platenik
Luis Rancel
Maximo Cintiori
James Tagger

Youth Charrette

Audrey McNeil
James Dixon
Donald Williams

Ed Jacobs
Guy Jones
Chris Mancini

Michael Williams
Frank Pagan
Mike Murphy
Dale Ann Royster
Cheryl Harris
Vicki Cromwell
Vicki Bernard
Deborah Bernard
Lori Feinberg
Kevin Rice
Reggie Mac Donald
David Field

Eileen Gilmore
Mike Drumney
Tom Coots
John Reiche
Janet Masterson
Bill Mitchell
Brian Rogers
Janice Urbano
Mark Zimmerman
David DeGrace
Richard Murphy
Kazi Stankus

PROFESSIONALS:

Project Staff

Ronald Barber - Charrette Leader
Paul E. Gallagher - Project Writer

Old Colony Planning Council

Alvin Jack Sims - Executive Director
Charles R. Rowe - Chief Planner
Frances Votta - Secretary

Consultants

Dr. Allan Leitman - President, Advisory for Educational Environments
Terry D'Eugenio - Consultant, A E E
Robert Houle - Consultant, A E E
Cornelia Voorhees - Consultant, A E E
Judith Albaum - Consultant, A E E
Cynthia Donahue - Community Organizer
George McGarry - Social Science Department, Brockton High School

Sponsors

Charles Boucher - Superintendent, Brockton Recreation Department
John Dorgan - Superintendent, Brockton Parks Department
C. Glover Thompson - Architect
Harry Allen - Director of Community Schools, Brockton School Department

James Lazour - Director of Physical Education,
Brockton School Department
William Burges - Social Science Department,
Brockton High School
Wayne T. Evans - Executive Director, Brockton
Y.M.C.A.
James Gillespie - Director of Y.M.C.A. Extension
Program
Laurence E. Zuk - Executive Director, Self-Help,
Inc., Brockton
Elizabeth Stanwood - Self-Help, Inc., Brockton
George Grover - Self-Help, Inc., Brockton
Barbara Skolnick - Self-Help, Inc., Brockton
Douglas King - Staff, Self-Help Child Develop-
ment Center
Robert Gracia - Staff, Self-Help Child Develop-
ment Center
Frances Danis - Staff, Self-Help Child Develop-
ment Center
Robert Johnson - Staff, Self-Help Child Develop-
ment Center

Donors

Beaver Nursery, Inc. - Al Richards
Shovels, wheelbarrows and picks.
Berretta & Grosier Buick & Opel Auto Sales
Bus service for students.
Brockton Edison Company - Al Hamer
Telephone poles and use of pole hole digger.
Brockton Forestry Department - Russell Nash
Wood chips.
Brockton Parks Department - John Dorgan
Land for Plymouth St. playground, sand, benches and tables, culvert
pipe, area clearance.
Brockton Recreation Department - Charles Boucher
Financing for completion of Plymouth St. playground, shovels, picks,
axes and cutting of poles.

Brockton Water Department
Shovels, wheelbarrows and culvert pipe.
J-J's Fish & Subs
Free sodas for students.
Sargent Supply Corp. - Gerald Kelleher
Lumber, nails, paint, brushes, wood preservative.
Self-Help, Inc.
Financing for Copeland School Playground.
Stillman Tire Company
Used tires.
Workel Auto Sales Co.
Used tires.

Bibliography

Arnstein, Sherry R., "A Ladder Of Citizen Participation", *AIP Journal*,
July, 1969.
Brookline Community Renewal Program, *Parks Evaluation*, Prepared
by Mason and Frey, Cambridge, Massachusetts, October, 1965.
Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, U.S. Department of the Interior,
Federal Assistance in Outdoor Recreation, Washington, D.C., Revised
1970.
Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, U.S. Department of the Interior,
Outdoor Recreation Space Standards, Washington, D.C., 1967.
Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, U.S. Department of the Interior,
Private Assistance in Outdoor Recreation, Washington, D.C., 1970.
Kohn, Sherwood D., *Experiment in Planning an Urban High School:*
The Baltimore Charette, New York, Educational Facilities Labora-
tories, 1969.
Rowe, Charles R., *Open Space for the OCP*, Brockton, Mass., Old
Colony Planning Council, 1969.
Sharkey, Tony, *Building a Playground*, Newton, Mass., Educational
Development Center, 1970.
Stone, Jeannette Galambos, with Rudolph, Nancy, *Play & Playgrounds*,
Washington, D.C., National Association for the Education of Young
Children, 1970.

*“an experiment in citizen participation . .
laymen and professionals working together
. . . planning, designing and constructing
a playground . . . ”*

